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EVERYCHILD

BY FREDERICK PETERSON

Out of the peace and sleep of Nowhere
Everychild comes,
Pushed by the Unknowable Will
Into this perplexing world,
Forever changing
With the procession of things in Time.
Not of his own will he comes,
But decreed to be the blithe carrier
Of human dreams and aspirations.
Latent in him lies promise
Of good for his generation,
Of gifts to posterity.

He and his million brothers
Create our country,
Weave the destiny of the nation.
They are our flag.
Shall we neglect this august possession,
This Supreme Property,
Remembering only mines, forests, railways,
Crops, livestock and ships?

What do we do for Everychild?
What should we do for Everychild?

The exact food, the careful shelter,
The fresh air sunshine and wide spaces
Of sky and meadow
For frolic play and happiness,
Given without stint to the young lambs
And the young colts and the young cattle —
Let us give Everychild these!

Into his perfected body pour
The wine and ambrosia
Of goodness and truth
And love and wisdom,

To fit him for the new world
That is to be,
For the new brotherhood of man
And the new work among new nations.

For Everychild
Let bloom the flower of opportunity!

It is not alone war,
That blood-stained Devourer,
That ravishes the garden of youth
Of joy and genius and glory;
But the unseen, insidious,
Slow despoilers of every day,
At work in the tenements,
In the mines and factories,
In the foundling hospitals,
Above all among the underfed millions
That we in our complacency
Think safe from danger in the schools.

Everychild looks at us inquiringly
From the streets,
From the many windows,
From orphan and foundling asylums,
From the factories,
From the squalid homes
And from the homeless places.
From the windows of the schools
He looks at us inquiringly,
He, the Future of the Race.

He looks at us and through us,
And far away
Into the distant future,
And sometimes in his eyes
There is hope and cheer,
And sometimes suffering and sorrow,
And sometimes reproach,
And sometimes despair.

We had best stop and look at Everychild.
He is not alone for his mother,
Not alone for his father,
But belongs to every one of us;
He is the deepest concern of us all.

What shall be done for Everychild?